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Research Triangle Park, North Carolina



# *Web-Based Approaches to Collecting Nutrition Data in the Schools*

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# Overview of RTI's Experience with School-Based Web Collections

- **Research Triangle Institute (RTI International)** - independent, nonprofit corporation with a distinguished history in scientific research and technology development located in Research Triangle Park, NC.
  
- **Examples of web-based collections in the schools:**
  - ◆ Safe and Drug-Free Schools Data Collection Project (South Dakota, Maine, and Kentucky)
  - ◆ National Evaluation of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative
  - ◆ Education Longitudinal Study
  - ◆ Technical Assistance in Performance Reporting: Office of Indian Education

# Potential Web-Based Nutrition Related Initiatives in the Schools

## ■ **Web-Based Data Collection Systems**

- ◆ Web-based data collection system for the NSL and NSB Program data.
- ◆ Web-based surveys of students and administrators on the effectiveness of current nutrition programs.

## ■ **Using the Web to Link and Distribute Data**

- ◆ Link school and student performance data with nutrition program participation.
- ◆ Provide a forum to facilitate communication and information sharing between groups (Schools, State Orgs, Dept of Ed, SFA, ASFSA, EIAC, USDA, NCES).

# Minimizing Respondent Burden

- **Inventory data that is already being collected**
- **Respondents must get more out than they put in**
- **Develop Web Tools Stakeholders can use**
  - ◆ Web tools make it easy to compare school/district/state level data (Query, Sort, and Export Data).
  - ◆ The web makes it easy to release results to the media and other sources.
- **Provide Automation for other reporting requirements:**
  - ◆ Expand data collections to include variables needed for other reporting requirements.
  - ◆ Develop web reports that mirror paper reports.



## A New Database: Information At Your Fingertips

The ability to examine program outcomes from

other state and local programs around the country will help local school districts identify and contact other programs to discuss why some are more successful than others. Because data from local school districts can be identified by a specific

geographic unit (e.g. counties), these data can be compared with data from other food assistance programs serving the same geographic areas.

This type of comparison allows program administrators and researchers to examine the extent to which programs are reaching those in need of services. ■

### Back to the Basics

In this report

[What is the National School Lunch Program?](#)  
[The National School Breakfast Program?](#)

[How does the NSL Program work?](#)

[What are the nutritional requirements for school lunches?](#)

[How do children qualify for free and reduced-price meals?](#)

[\(click here for more...\)](#)

*"Eat Smart.  
Play Hard."*



United States Department  
of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition  
Service

Child Nutrition Division

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## Participation Trends - How They Compare

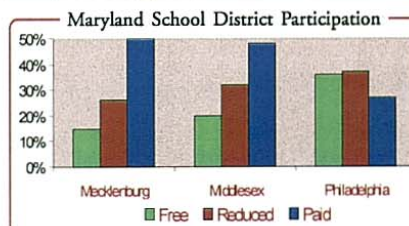
Examine data from local school districts

Current Focus: **Maryland**

Here is a sample chart of the number of free, reduced price, and paid meals served, and the rates of school lunch and school breakfast participation in large school districts located in Maryland.

[Table 1a](#) provides details on the top ten school districts in this state.

Next month's focus: **Florida's panhandle**



### Food Authority Survey

Examine the issues that many School Food Authorities say concern them today.

Administrative issues rated as "concerns" by School Food Authorities		
Issue	Responses	Rank
Issue 1	XXX	X
Issue 2	XX	XX
Issue 3	XXX	X
Issue 4	XXX	X
Issue 5	XXXX	XX

[Appendix A](#) provides definitions of each issue.

### Demographic Data Now Available On-line

Now you can run comparative queries using the NSL/NSB Demographic Detailer. This database allows you to compare ten primary variables.

**Compare**

Select State (1)

Select School District (1)

Select State (2)

Select School District (2)

# Provide Flexibility to Allow Stakeholders to Customize Data Flow

- **Allow stakeholders to oversee the data collection and assign tasks**
  - ◆ Every State/County/District/SFA/School has a different data flow structure.
  - ◆ Administrative Assistants are often the best suited to gather and submit data.
  - ◆ Prevent the “one password for all” problem.
  - ◆ Allow stakeholders to maintain ‘signature’ authority.



# Effectively Using the Power of the Web

- **Database-driven web applications allow for customizing data collection.**
  - ◆ Pre-fill school names and other data where known.
  - ◆ Customize terminology that is familiar to the respondent (ex. Some states might use 'school districts' or 'local educational agencies' (LEAs) to define regional groupings of schools.)
- **Moving Paper Collections to the Web**
  - ◆ Don't dramatically alter the format or structure of a collection when moving to the web.



<b>Worksheet 1</b> Services to Students	<b>Worksheet 2</b> Community Involvement	<b>Worksheet 3</b> Law Violations
<b>Worksheet 6</b> Board Violations	<b>Worksheet 9</b> Victims and Offenders	<b>Worksheet 10</b> Firearms Expulsions
<b>Worksheet 11</b> School Security Measures	<b>Worksheet 12</b> Suspensions by Transportation Code	<b>Worksheet 13</b> Expulsions by Transportation Code

Go to Worksheet 11

## School Worksheet # 1: Services to Students (Public School Only)

1. Total School [Enrollment](#) (Public School Only)

0

2. Please select the drug and/or violence prevention services/activities provided to public school students:

Services for Public School Students	Provided in 2000-2001	SDFSCA-funded, in whole or in part?	Funded, in whole or in part, through KY Safe Schools Act?
<a href="#">After-school or before school program</a>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Alternative education programs</a>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Community service projects</a>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Conflict resolution/peer mediation</a>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Curriculum acquisition or development</a>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Drug prevention instruction</a>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
Family services	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
Medical services	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Parent education/involvement</a>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
Psychological services	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
Screening to identify students at risk for emotional disabilities and antisocial behavior	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>

# Data Validation on the Web

- **Web-based collection allows for easy data validation:**
  - ◆ Use client and server side data checks before submission.
  - ◆ Explain validation problems for respondents (i.e. Error Reports)
  - ◆ Validate against other data sources. (Ex. Checking Enrollment vs. the NCES Common Core of Data).
  - ◆ Don't go overboard making assumptions when developing web validation & skip logic. (Year-round and other non-traditional schools often create anomalies).

# Investigate Internal Systems and Data

- **Try to integrate with current software used at the collection point.**
  - ◆ Software vendors will often tweak software to allow for easy file abstraction and uploads over the web.
- **Code towards standards.**
  - ◆ The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) initiated a pilot project to develop a data collection methodology to integrate data collection and business process using industry standards in order to reduce data redundancy within the Department of Education and reduce the reporting burden on states.

# Identify and Link with External Data Sources

- Thousands of different datasets are available over the web from surveys.
- If state level data is reported, usually it can be tracked down at other levels.
- Many states, local schools and agencies have lots of public domain data available for download. This is data that wasn't easily available 5-10 years ago.

# Leave Something Positive After the Initiative is Complete

- **Build web systems so the state/districts/SFA/schools can maintain the process and reports after the collection has ended.**
  - ◆ Working with IT groups early on to develop specification and processes for transition.
  - ◆ Use the initiatives to help build capabilities at the school or authority.

# Other Computing Issues Unique to the Web

- **Involve the computing staff in the collection**

- ◆ Don't view the computing staff just as a support, involve them in the projects and programs.

- **Section 508**

- ◆ Section 508 requires that Federal agencies' electronic and information technology is accessible to people with disabilities.

- **Keep data anonymous**

- ◆ Protect against releasing information that can identify an individual.
- ◆ De-identification of data

- **Lack of Computing Access**

- ◆ Often schools do not have direct access to the Internet for Security and other concerns.
- ◆ Make plans to allow for respondents without computers or the web.

# Questions?

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